

## Coronavirus deaths rising in 30 US states amid winter surge

By DAVID CRARY  
AP National Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Coronavirus deaths are rising in nearly two-thirds of American states as a winter surge pushes the overall toll toward 400,000 amid warnings that a new, highly contagious variant is taking hold. As Americans observed a national holiday Monday, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo pleaded with federal authorities to curtail travel from countries where new variants are spreading.

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In this Jan. 12, 2021 photo provided by the Los Angeles County Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner, National Guard members assisting with processing COVID-19 deaths, placing them into temporary storage at the medical examiner-coroner's office in Los Angeles.

Associated Press



Sharing Menu \$50 per couple



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## Coronavirus deaths rising in 30 US states amid winter surge



In this Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021, file photo, Norton, Mass. police salute as a hearse carrying colleague Det. Sgt. Stephen Desfosses briefly stops in front of the police station.

Associated Press

### Continued from Front

Referring to new variants detected in Britain, South Africa and Brazil, Cuomo said: "Stop those people from coming here.... Why are you allowing people to fly into this country and then it's too late?"

The U.S. government has already curbed travel from some of the places where the new variants are spreading — such as Britain and Brazil — and recently it announced that it would require proof of a negative COVID-19 test for anyone flying into the country. But the new variant seen in Britain is already spreading in the U.S., and the Centers for Disease Control and Protection has warned that it will probably become the dominant version in the country by March. The CDC said the variant is about 50% more contagious than the virus that is causing the bulk of cases in the U.S. While the variant does not cause more severe illness, it can cause more hospitali-

zations and deaths simply because it spreads more easily. In Britain, it has aggravated a severe outbreak that has swamped hospitals, and it has been blamed for sharp leaps in cases in some other European countries.

As things stand, many U.S. states are already under tremendous strain. The seven-day rolling average of daily deaths is rising in 30 states and the District of Columbia, and on Monday the U.S. death toll surpassed 398,000, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University — by far the highest recorded death toll of any country in the world. Ellie Murray, an assistant professor of epidemiology at the Boston University School of Public Health, said cases have proliferated in part because of gatherings for Christmas and New Year — and compounded previous surges from Thanksgiving and the return of students to schools and universities in the fall.

The pace of any further

spread will depend on whether those who did gather with family and friends quarantined afterward or went back to school or work in person, she said.

One of the states hardest hit during the recent surge is Arizona, where the rolling average has risen over the past two weeks from about 90 deaths per day to about 160 per day on Jan. 17. Rural Yuma County — known as the winter lettuce capital of the U.S. — is now one of the state's hot spots. Exhausted nurses there are now regularly sending COVID-19 patients on a long helicopter ride to hospitals in Phoenix when they don't have enough staff. The county has lagged on coronavirus testing in heavily Hispanic neighborhoods and just ran out of vaccines.

But some support is coming from military nurses and a new wave of free tests for farmworkers and the elderly in Yuma County.

Amid the rise in cases, a

vast effort is underway to get Americans vaccinated — what Cuomo called "a footrace" between the vaccination rate and the infection rate. But the campaign is off to an uneven start. According to the latest federal data, about 31.2 million doses of vaccine have been distributed, but only about 10.6 million people have received at least one dose.

In some cases, vaccine supplies thus far do not meet demand. More than 172,000 people in Missouri's St. Louis County have registered for the vaccine, but the local health department so far has only received 975 doses, said County Executive Sam Page.

In California, the most populous state, counties are pleading for more vaccine as the state tries to reduce a high rate of infection that has led to record numbers of hospitalizations and deaths.

Although the state last week said anyone age 65 and older can start receiving the vaccine, Los Angeles County and some others have said they don't have enough to immunize so many people. They are concentrating on protecting health care workers and the most vulnerable elderly in care homes first. On Monday, the superintendent of the Los Angeles Unified School District sent a letter asking for state and county authorization to provide vaccinations at schools for staff, local community members — and for students once a vaccine for children has been approved.

The death rate from COVID-19 in Los Angeles County — an epicenter of the U.S. pandemic — works out to about one person every

six minutes. On Sunday, the South Coast Air Quality Management District suspended some pollution-control limits on the number of cremations for at least 10 days in order to deal with a backlog of bodies at hospitals and funeral homes.

In other areas of the country, officials are working to ensure that people take the vaccine once they're offered it amid concerns that many people are hesitant. Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, in a livestreamed event on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, received a shot, and urged other Marylanders to do likewise.

"We're all looking forward to the day we can take off and throw away our masks," Hogan said. "The only way we are going to return to a sense of normalcy is by these COVID-19 vaccines."

But challenges to the vaccine campaign are surfacing worldwide.

The World Health Organization chief on Monday lambasted drugmakers' profits and vaccine inequalities, saying it's "not right" that younger, healthier adults in some wealthy countries get vaccinated against COVID-19 before older people or health care workers in poorer countries.

Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus lamented that one country received a mere 25 doses while over 39 million doses have been administered in nearly 50 richer nations.

"Just 25 doses have been given in one lowest income country — not 25 million, not 25,000 — just 25. I need to be blunt: The world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure," Tedros said. He did not specify the country, but a WHO spokeswoman identified it as Guinea. □

# Census Bureau director to resign amid criticism over data

By MIKE SCHNEIDER

Associated Press

Facing criticism over efforts to produce citizenship data to comply with an order from President Donald Trump, U.S. Census Bureau director Steven Dillingham said Monday that he planned to resign with the change in presidential administrations.

Dillingham said in a statement that he would resign on Wednesday, the day Trump leaves the White House and President-elect Joseph Biden takes office. Dillingham's term was supposed to be finished at the end of the year.

The Census Bureau director's departure comes as the statistical agency is crunching the numbers for the 2020 census, which will be used to determine how many congressional seats and Electoral College votes each state gets, as well as the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in federal spending each year.

In his statement, Dillingham said he had been considering retiring earlier, but he had been persuaded at the time to stick around.

"But I must do now what I think is best," said Dillingham, 68. "Let me make it clear that under other circumstances I would be honored to serve President-Elect Biden just as I served



U.S. Census Director Steven Dillingham pauses after speaking at a news conference to urge Arizonans to participate in the nation's once-a-decade census population count Thursday, Sept. 17, 2020, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

the past five presidents." A Census Bureau spokesman said the agency's chief operating officer, Ron Jarmin, will assume the director's duties. Jarmin served in the same role before Dillingham became director two years ago. Last week, Democratic lawmakers called on Dillingham to resign after a watchdog agency said he had set a deadline that pressured statisticians to produce a report on the number of people in the U.S. illegally.

A report by the Office of Inspector General last week said bureau workers were under significant pressure from two Trump political appointees to figure out who is in the U.S. illegally using federal and state administrative records, and Dillingham had set a Friday deadline for bureau statisticians to provide him a technical report on the effort. One whistleblower told the Office of Inspector General that the work was "statistically indefensible." After the release of the in-

spector general's report, leaders of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, Asian Americans Advancing Justice and The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights called for Dillingham's resignation, and several Democratic lawmakers followed suit. Dillingham then ordered an indefinite halt to the efforts to produce data showing the citizenship status of every U.S. resident through administrative records. During Dillingham's tenure,

the Trump administration unsuccessfully tried to put a citizenship question on the 2020 census questionnaire, and the president issued two directives that advocacy groups said were part of efforts to suppress the participation of minorities and immigrants in the head count of every U.S. resident. Trump's first directive, issued in 2019, instructed the Census Bureau to use administrative records to figure out who is in the country illegally after the Supreme Court blocked the citizenship question. In the second directive last year, Trump instructed the Census Bureau to provide data that would allow his administration to exclude people in the U.S. illegally from the numbers used for divvying up congressional seats among the states.

An influential GOP adviser had advocated excluding them from the apportionment process in order to favor Republicans and non-Hispanic whites, even though the Constitution spells out that every person in each state should be counted. Trump's unprecedented order on apportionment was challenged in more than a half-dozen lawsuits around the U.S., but the Supreme Court ruled last month that any challenge was premature. □

## King Day service calls for nonviolence amid turbulent times

ATLANTA (AP) — Speakers at the annual Martin Luther King Jr. holiday celebration in Atlanta called Monday for a renewed dedication to nonviolence following a turbulent year in which a deadly pandemic, protests over systemic racism and a divisive election capped by an attack on the U.S. Capitol strained Americans' capacity for civility.

"This King holiday has not only come at a time of great peril and physical violence, it has also come during a time of violence in our speech — what we say and how we say it," said the Rev. Bernice King,

the slain civil rights leader's daughter. "It is frankly out of control and we are causing too much harm to one another."

The coronavirus pandemic forced the annual King Day service at Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church online during the 35th celebration of his birthday as a national holiday. His family was among a sparse group wearing masks and sitting far apart amid mostly empty pews as others delivered remarks remotely.

Bernice King said the toll of the pandemic, lingering outrage over killings of unarmed Black people

and the deadly siege in Washington by supporters of President Donald Trump all underscore an urgent need to pursue what her father called "the beloved community" — a world in which conflict is solved nonviolently and compassion dictates policy.

"We still have a choice today — nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation," Bernice King said, again reciting the words of her father. "This may well be mankind's last chance to choose between chaos and community."

The ceremony included prerecorded remarks by



G.A. Breedlove stands outside of the historic Ebenezer First Baptist Church where Martin Luther King Jr. preached on Monday, Jan. 18, 2021, in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

President-elect Joe Biden, who recalled sensing the civil rights leader's "restless spirit" during a visit to the National Civil Rights Museum housed at the Tennessee motel where he was fatally shot outside his room.

"We must not rest. It's our responsibility to come together, all Americans, to bring peace to that restless spirit," Biden said. "... That's our charge in the days ahead. That's the charge in the years ahead." □

## School choice lawsuit surge pushes possible high court fight

By LISA RATHKE  
Associated Press

Vermont is facing at least its second lawsuit in four months over a voucher program that allows students in communities that don't have schools or are not part of supervisory unions to attend schools of their choice, including approved private institutions. The Vermont system in which certain towns pay tuition for students to attend other schools is unconstitutional because it's not available to all students in the state, according to the Liberty Justice Center, a Chicago-based national nonprofit law firm that fights for school choice. If the lawsuit succeeds, officials at the nonprofit say they will file legal challenges in other states with similar school choice programs. But critics say the lawsuit is a veiled attempt to get a case to the U.S. Supreme Court, where conservative judges hold six of nine seats, to get more public funding into private education, including religious schools. The Vermont suit comes six months after a divided U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a Montana case that states can't cut religious schools



This Jan. 17, 2021 photo shows the independent Thaddeus Stevens School in Lyndon, Vt.  
Associated Press

out of programs that send public money to private education. Following that decision, three Vermont families filed a lawsuit in September in federal court, saying that denying them the state tuition benefit to send their children to religious schools is unconstitutional. A similar lawsuit challenging Maine's exclusion of religious schools from a high school tuition voucher program was denied by the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of

Appeals and the parents challenging the law and their attorneys have vowed to appeal the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. Another lawsuit was filed in New Hampshire. Maine and New Hampshire have similar programs for students who live in communities without schools to attend public or non-religious private schools of their choice. In light of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Montana

case, the federal appeals court granted an injunction on Friday to stop Vermont from excluding a high school student who attends a religious school from taking college classes under the state's dual enrollment program. In the latest suit in Vermont, lawyers for the four families suing the state and their school districts argue that Vermont's town tuition system violates the Vermont constitution that "obligates the state to

provide every school-age child in Vermont an equal educational opportunity" and prohibits the state from adopting policies that deprive children of that.

"The town tuitioning program is an exceptional benefit to families but it is fundamentally unfair to only offer it some families and not to all of Vermonters," said Brian Kelsey, senior attorney at the Liberty Justice Center. "The families that we represent are struggling to pay for private school tuition and they have a serious need to benefit from the town tuitioning system like parents in the state."

One family has a 15-year-old wheelchair-bound son, who requires assistance with basic activities, including eating and going to the bathroom, according to the complaint. The district has school choice for 7th and 8th grade so he was able to attend the independent Compass School, where he has been thriving, the lawsuit states. The school gave him his own bathroom, added wheelchair ramps and staff, and processed his food so he can eat at school, the complaint said.□

## Man allegedly hid 3 months at Chicago airport due to virus

**CHICAGO (AP)** — A California man who told police that the coronavirus pandemic left him afraid

to fly has been arrested on charges that he hid in a secured area at Chicago's O'Hare International



This Saturday, Jan. 16, 2021, booking photo provided by the Cook County Sheriff's Office shows Aditya Singh.

Associated Press

Airport for three months. Aditya Singh, 36, is charged with felony criminal trespass to a restricted area of an airport and misdemeanor theft after he was arrested Saturday. At a court hearing on Sunday, a judge ruled that the Orange, California, man could be released if he paid \$1,000, but said that Singh was prohibited from setting foot in the airport. As of Monday morning, Singh remained in the Cook County Jail.

Assistant Public Defender Courtney Smallwood said Singh does not have a criminal record. She also said it was unclear why Singh, who is unemployed, came to Chicago or if he has ties to the area.

During the hearing, Assistant States Attorney Kathleen Hagerty said that Singh was spotted by two United Airlines employees, who asked him for identification, the Chicago Tribune reported. Singh lowered his mask and showed a badge that actually belonged to an operations manager at the airport who had reported it missing in late October, Hagerty said.

The employees called police, who took Singh into custody. Singh was "scared to go home due to COVID," Hagerty said, and told authorities that he'd found the badge and that other passengers at the airport had given him food.

Before she granted Singh bail, Cook County Judge Susana Ortiz was clearly troubled that someone could remain in a secured area for so long at the airport without anyone noticing.

"The court finds these facts and circumstances quite shocking for the alleged period of time that this occurred," the judge said. "Being in a secured part of the airport under a fake ID badge allegedly, based upon the need for airports to be absolutely secure so that people feel safe to travel, I do find those alleged actions do make him a danger to the community."

Singh is scheduled to return to court Jan. 27.□

# Freezing weather hits much of Europe, from Poland to Turkey

By VANESSA GERA

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) —

Extreme cold has hit large parts of Europe, with freezing temperatures cracking railroad tracks in Poland, snow blanketing the Turkish city of Istanbul and smog spiking as coal was being burned to generate heat. In Switzerland, a skier who had been buried by an avalanche on the weekend died in a hospital of his injuries, authorities said Monday.

The country had issued avalanche warnings several days earlier after heavy snowfall hit various regions. Officials said the skier and his two companions were buried by an avalanche while they were skiing off marked trails in the Gstaad area on Sunday afternoon. One man was able to free himself from the snow and then extricate one of the others, but the third man could only be found by rescue crews who arrived later on the scene. He was taken to a hospital in critical condition and died a short time later, authorities said.

Temperatures dropped to minus 28 degrees Celsius (minus 18 Fahrenheit) in some Polish areas overnight, the coldest night in



Deeply covered with snow are the trees at the Grenzadler in Oberhof, Germany, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021.

Associated Press

11 years. Many trains were delayed on Monday after tracks at two Warsaw railway stations cracked.

Hand-in-hand with the cold came a spike in smog in Warsaw and other parts of Poland, as the cold prompted an increase in burning coal for heat. Air pollution levels were so high in Warsaw that city officials urged people to remain indoors. Just across Poland's southwestern border, the Czech Republic experienced the

coldest night this year with temperatures dropping below minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus 4 Fahrenheit) in many places.

The lowest temperature, of minus 27 degrees Celsius (minus 16 Fahrenheit), was recorded Monday in Orlické Zahorí, a mountainous village 160 kilometers (100 miles) east of Prague and near the Polish border, according to the Czech Hydrometeorological Institute.

The freezing weather was expected to ease and be replaced by heavy snowfall in the northeastern Czech Republic, the institute said. Wintry weather and freezing temperatures have also been reported throughout the Balkans in the past days, which has created problems with power supplies in some parts of Serbia and brought some snow even to Croatia's Adriatic Sea islands.

The deep freeze has

caused water supply pipes to freeze and created dangerous driving conditions. The icy roads in the city of Pogradec prevented firefighters from arriving in time at a home fire in which a man died early Monday.

The man's brother, Nikolin Xhukellari, told the Balkanweb online portal that he managed to get his two children and wife out of the building but his brother, who was on the second floor, could not escape.

In Istanbul, traffic was brought to a halt by the layer of snow covering the city, with cars stalled or skidding on the roads.

In Germany, fresh snow, slippery roads and fallen trees led to several car accidents on Sunday and overnight, the dpa news agency reported. A driver died in southwestern Germany after his car shot over a mound of snow.

The Nordic region also saw snow and subfreezing temperatures, with the coldest temperatures predictably recorded in the Arctic. Norway's meteorological institute tweeted a tongue-in-cheek message on Monday, saying: "we encourage all knitting lovers to send woolen clothes to their friends in the north." □

## U.K. seafood trucks protest at Parliament over Brexit red tape

By JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Trucks owned by U.K. shellfish firms

descended on Britain's Parliament Monday to protest the Brexit-related red tape they claim is suffocat-

ing their businesses.

More than a dozen large lorries — one bearing the words "Brexit carnage!" — drove past the Houses of Parliament in central London and parked outside Downing St., home to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Police spoke to the drivers, who could face fines for breaching coronavirus restrictions by making non-essential journeys.

British fishing communities were among the strongest supporters of leaving the European Union, because it promised the chance for the U.K. to leave the bloc's complex system of fishing quotas and regain control over who is allowed to fish in British waters.

But now some in Britain's fishing industry say they are facing ruin because of new barriers to shipping their catch abroad.

Last week, one Scottish fishing boss threatened to dump his rotting catch on politicians' doorstep if the situation did not improve. Fishing rights became a major sticking point in the trade negotiations that followed the U.K.'s political departure from the bloc in January 2020, as European nations sought to retain access to waters where they have fished for decades or even centuries. Under a new post-Brexit U.K.-EU trade deal signed last month, the EU's share of the catch in British seas will be cut by 25% over a

5½-year transition period. After that, new quotas will have to be negotiated.

At the same time, Britain's exit from the EU means new costs and red tape for exporters — a major problem, since Britain exports most of the fish its boats catch. Some fishing companies say the new restrictions have made it impossible to ship their catch to Europe. Some British fishermen have begun landing their catch in EU member Denmark to keep it in the bloc. "If this debacle does not improve very soon we are looking at many established businesses coming to the end of the line," said Alasdair Hughson, chairman of the Scottish Creel Fisherman's Federation. □



A shellfish export truck with a protest sign written across the trailer 'Incompetent Government Destroying Shellfish Industry' drives past the Palace of Westminster in London, Monday, Jan. 18, 2021, during a demonstration by British Shellfish exporters to protest Brexit-related red tape they claim is suffocating their business.

Associated Press

# Israel moves to rein in rights group over 'apartheid' use

By TIA GOLDENBERG

Associated Press

**TEL AVIV, Israel (AP)** — Israel's education minister says he is banning groups that call Israel an "apartheid state" from lecturing at schools — a move that targets one of the country's leading human rights groups after it began describing both Israel and its control of the Palestinian territories as a single apartheid system.

The explosive term, long seen as taboo and mostly used by the country's harshest critics, is vehemently rejected by Israel's leaders and many ordinary Israelis.

Education Minister Yoav Galant tweeted late on Sunday that he had instructed the ministry's director general to "prevent the entry of organizations calling Israel 'an apartheid state' or demeaning Israeli soldiers from lecturing at schools."

"The Education Ministry under my leadership raised the banner of advancing Jewish, democratic and Zionist values and it is acting accordingly," he said. It was not immediately clear whether he had the authority to ban speakers from schools.

In a report released last week, the rights group B'Tselem said that while Palestinians live under different forms of Israeli control in the occupied West Bank, blockaded Gaza,



In this March 7, 2019, file photo, settlers jump on a trampoline as an Israeli soldier stands guard in the Israeli controlled part of the West Bank city of Hebron.

Associated Press

annexed east Jerusalem and within Israel itself, they have fewer rights than Jews in the entire area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. B'Tselem said it would not be deterred by the minister's announcement and that despite it, the group gave a lecture on the subject via videocall to a school in the northern city of Haifa on Monday.

"B'Tselem is determined to keep with its mission of documenting reality, analyzing it, and making our findings publicly known to the Israeli public, and worldwide," it said in a statement.

Adalah, an Arab legal

rights group, said it had appealed to the country's attorney general to cancel Galant's directive, saying it was made without the proper authority and that it was intended to "silence legitimate voices."

Israel passed a law in 2018 preventing lectures or activities in schools by groups that support legal action being taken against Israeli soldiers abroad. The law was apparently drafted in response to the work of Breaking the Silence, a whistleblower group for former Israeli soldiers who oppose policies in the occupied West Bank.

It was not clear if Galant's

decree was rooted in the 2018 law.

Israel has long presented itself as a thriving democracy. Its own Arab citizens, who make up about 20% of its population of 9.3 million, have citizenship rights, but they often suffer from discrimination in housing and other spheres. Arab citizens of Israel have representatives in parliament, serve in government bureaucracy and work in various fields alongside Jewish Israelis. Israel seized east Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 war — lands that are home to nearly 5 million Palestinians and which the Palestinians

want for a future state. B'Tselem and other rights groups argue that the boundaries separating Israel and the West Bank vanished long ago — at least for Israeli settlers, who can freely travel back and forth, while their Palestinian neighbors require permits to enter Israel.

Israel withdrew troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005 but imposed a blockade after the Palestinian militant Hamas group seized power there two years later. It considers the West Bank "disputed" territory whose fate should be determined in peace talks with the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority, the autonomy government for its Palestinian residents.

Israel annexed east Jerusalem in 1967 in a move not recognized internationally and considers the entire city its unified capital. Most Palestinians in east Jerusalem are Israeli "residents," but not citizens with voting rights.

Israel adamantly rejects the term apartheid, saying the restrictions it imposes in Gaza and the West Bank are temporary measures needed for security. Most Palestinians in the West Bank live in areas governed by the Palestinian Authority, but those areas are surrounded by Israeli checkpoints and Israeli soldiers can enter at any time. Israel has full control over 60% of the West Bank. □

## EU gender pay gap still significant, warn trade unions

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — Women in Europe doing jobs requiring the same skills as jobs done by men are still being paid significantly less, according to a study by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

The major trade union organization, which represents 45 million members in 38 European countries, compared wages in two countries from Western and Eastern Europe — Germany and Romania — looking at women working in the sector of household appliances and men working in car manufacturing.

The organization looked at sever-

al criteria including skills, physical effort and responsibility.

It compared full-time workers of the same age and with a permanent contract working for medium-sized companies.

In Germany, ETUC said, women in the white goods sector earn €865 less per month in gross income than men making cars, for jobs requiring similar skills.

In Romania, where wages are significantly lower, the average difference in net income is €244, ETUC said.

"Comparing the pay of women and men in the manufacturing sector shows clearly how women

are paid less even when their jobs require the same levels of skill and physical effort as those of men," ETUC deputy general secretary Esther Lynch said.

"The COVID crisis has also exposed the deep-rooted bias behind wages for professions dominated by women, with carers and cleaners recognized as 'essential' despite being amongst the lowest paid."

Last year, using data from the EU's statistical office, the trade union organization said women would have to wait for another 84 years and the next century to achieve equal pay at the current pace of

change.

ETUC called on the European executive commission to quickly come forward with its pay transparency directive.

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen had planned to present measures to introduce binding pay transparency measures in the first 100 days of her mandate, but the proposals have yet to be unveiled.

"Quality is more important than speed in this case," EU commission spokesman Christian Wigand said.

"We'll come forward with proposals in the coming months." □

## Weary migrants wait at Guatemala roadblock as caravan stalls

By SANDRA SEBASTIAN

Associated Press

VADO HONDO, Guatemala

(AP) — Hundreds of Honduran migrants awoke tired and hungry Monday after a second night stuck along a rural Guatemalan roadside by police and soldiers who will not let them pass. A steep mountain and tall wall flanking the rural highway have allowed Guatemalan authorities to bottle up the group that had numbered about 2,000 when it pushed into Guatemala Friday night.

Their ranks have reduced through attrition as some migrants have agreed to be bused back to the Honduran border. A smaller number have been forcefully sent back after scuffling with authorities who held their line with baton strikes and tear gas.

Guatemala's immigration authorities said Monday that another group of about 800 migrants had been located about 40 kilometers farther north along the highway near Rio Hondo. They are also blocked from advancing there, but



Honduran migrants rest on the side of the road near a police roadblock at a highway in Vado Hondo, Guatemala, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021.

authorities said they successfully negotiated opening one lane of traffic so vehicles could pass.

In total, some 8,000 to 9,000 Honduran migrants were believed to have entered Guatemala in the year's first caravan after departing from San Pedro Sula, Honduras early Friday. Honduras has been battered

by the COVID-19 pandemic and two major hurricanes that struck in November, leaving thousands homeless. That's on top of the existing lack of economic opportunity and persistent gang violence.

In Vado Hondo Monday, site of the roadblock outside Chiquimula, migrants leaned against the wall or

the lines of police and soldiers.

On Sunday, Guatemala's Health Ministry reported that 21 of the migrants who sought medical attention at health centers had tested positive for the coronavirus. The department said the 12 men and nine women would not be returned to Honduras until they undergo quarantine at centers in Guatemala.

Even if the migrants manage to find their way to the Mexican border, that government has made a show of force with thousands of National Guard members and immigration agents waiting there.

"We are proposing that they seek a dialogue with the migrants, in Honduras, Guatemala," President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said Monday. "They should attend to them so that they don't enter any country by force."

The president said he also hopes to hear U.S. President-elect Joe Biden address immigration in his inauguration speech Wednesday. □

## Japan urges South Korea to drop wartime compensation demands



In this Aug. 14, 2017, file photo, a comfort woman statue is placed on a chair of a bus to mark the 5th International Memorial Day for Comfort Women, in Seoul, South Korea.

Associated Press

By MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's

foreign minister accused South Korea on Monday of worsening already strained ties by making "illegal" demands for compensation for the sexual abuse

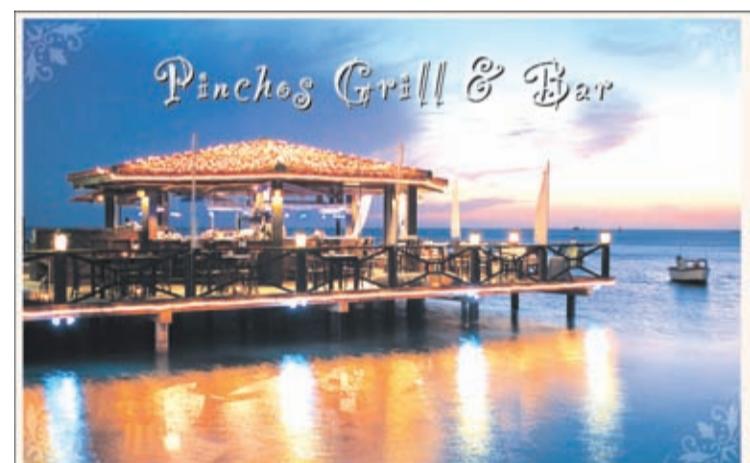
of Korean women and use of forced laborers during World War II.

Toshimitsu Motegi, in a diplomatic policy speech in parliament, said a recent South Korean court ruling ordering Japan to compensate 12 South Korean

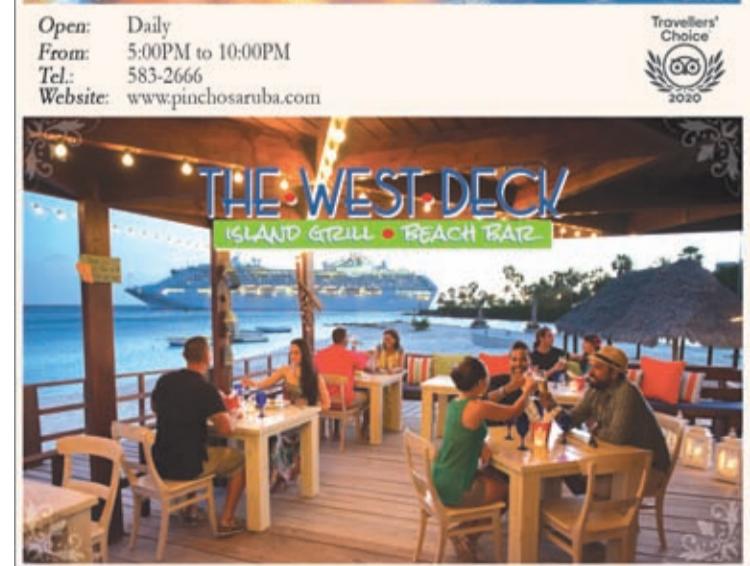
women who were sexually abused in Japanese military brothels during the war was "an abnormal development absolutely unthinkable under international law and bilateral relations." "We strongly urge South Korea to correct the violation of international law as soon as possible" and restore healthy relations, Motegi said.

The Seoul Central District Court ruled on Jan. 8 that the Japanese government must give 100 million won (\$91,360) to each of 12 elderly women who filed lawsuits in 2013 over their wartime suffering as "comfort women."

They were among tens of thousands of women across Japanese-occupied Asia and the Pacific who were sent to front-line Japanese army brothels. □

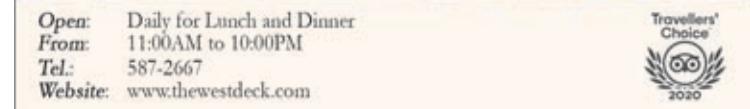


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## 'It's like Family'

**EAGLE BEACH** — Casa del Mar Beach Resort & Timeshare offers you paradise: an oceanfront location on the white sandy Eagle Beach, the amazing blue-green colored Caribbean ocean, wonderful luxury oceanfront or poolside timesharing suites and a world of amenities like spa, casino, restaurant, pool and fitness. But the most precious they have to offer can only be experienced by staying with them: the family, the staff of Casa del Mar and the heart of the place. The personal service goes naturally and one of the best examples of pure dedication to her job is: Jessica Mei-Alders.

Jessica works 42 years for the company and is presently a Member Relations Coordinator. "I take care of the buyers that purchase a suite via our sales office or direct through an owner. We handle the membership procedure in the system, we arrange for them to get their ownership documents, handle the back and forward correspondence and keep close contact with them. I feel we are the meeting point between the resort and the members. We know what they want as before they buy they will contact us." She loves her job and likes to accept challenges that make 'her members' happy. "I just love giving service. This is more to me than just a job."

### Unique Feeling

Many guests consider the resort and the island as their second home and most favorite place, explains Jessica. The email she received just before this interview proves this as an owner expressed high concern about how everyone is doing with the hurricanes going on. "There is a great connection between our members and the staff. With a lot of families we have the second or third generation staying with us, so I lived and live a lot of stages with the owners." Jessica explains she even checked upon some Mexican owners if they are doing okay after the earthquake. "When you work with certain families for years already, you get attached."

### Like Family

The passion for her job is driven by the feeling that she is part of a family here. "The team, the colleagues, from bottom up there is a great connection and in my opinion this energy is felt by our guests." Her favorite spot in the hotel is her desk with her PC as that is where she serves her members. But this has not always been her working place. "I started where I was a baby", she jokes. "Seriously, I was fresh out

of school, only 18 years old and started working in 1978 at the Aruba Beach Club, at that time part of Casa del Mar." She started in reservations and at a certain point she was approached to enter the Membership department with Mister Frank Conway, the first membership director. "Our conference room is named after him."

### Perfect Day

Jessica's perfect day at the resort, if she would be a guest, is indulging in all offered paradise ingredients: the beach, the pool, Matthew's restaurant and enjoying the comfortable suite. "Two years from now I will be 62 but -if the resort allows me- will still be here doing what I love to do: serving members." □



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**Papillon Restaurant presents:  
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magnificent local food**

PALM BEACH —A true once-in-a-lifetime experience is coming up. The stage: an Aruban cunucu house creating a magical ambiance. The play: The Secret Garden; a 6-course culinary voyage by a Michelin-trained chef from Belgium, Griet Vanbrabant. The content: 100% local products from local farmers tuned into the most amazing dishes; leaving you in an enchanted state and giving you a memory that will last a lifetime. Be sure to reserve this opportunity before others do. This production is presented to you by Papillon Restaurant.

Sometimes combining the best of the best is a matter of all things falling into place. Every Wednesday of January, 2021, from 7p.m. to 10p.m. you are welcomed to enter a world where food is a passion. Papillon Restaurant presents their guest chef, Vanbrabant - who will be on the island for a limited time period - and with The Secret Garden menu being a fresh concept on the island, we're sure you will fall completely in love with this.

**A bit about Griet**

Vanbrabant is a passionate chef with over 15 years of experience in fine dining menu development, culinary staff management, food preparation and creative recipe design.

She is educated in classic French Cuisine and Modern Gastronomy teachings throughout her international career in Michelin star and the World's 50 Best restaurants



such as El Bulli and Comerc 24 in Barcelona, Pujol in Mexico City, Rockpool in Australia. Let her entice you with her succulent, Aruban recipes like they've never tasted before.

The menu is carefully done with local products, fresh and perfectly matched with a selection of wines by local sommeliers. Diet options are available; please



inform them when you make your reservation.

**The Secret Garden & Papillon**

This is an in-home dining experience where you will feel you are part of an exclusive setting. Private culinary events are the owner's specialty and their lush, tropical garden is also inviting for you to relax and indulge in hours of authentic culinary delights, a heaven to foodies. For more than a decade, Papillon restaurant has built a reputation with the fusion of classic French cuisine, Dutch and Caribbean flavors. They know how to thrill and in collaboration with The Secret Garden we can only expect phenomenal. □

**Papillon**  
RESTAURANT

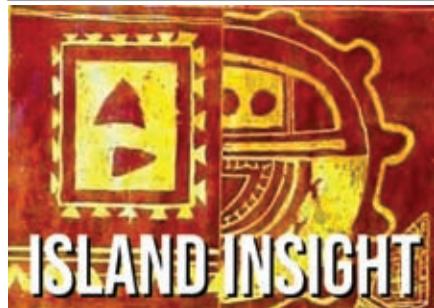
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Article by Etnia Nativa

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## Aruba in the eye of the Dutch

**ORANJESTAD** — From the end of the sixteenth century the Dutch began exploring the Spanish new world territories and were first seen in 1585 around our islands by Caque-tian scouts. Small companies at Amsterdam, Enkhuizen and Rotterdam organized illicit trade with their partners on the Iberian dominions across the Atlantic.

The role of Amsterdam's Sephardic merchants in the westward expansion of commerce and trade across the vast ocean, offered an historical turning point for Holland as a world power, by connecting the Dutch capital to the growing network of emerging merchants of the "Portuguese Nation," who were conducting trade from the Iberian Peninsula and its American colonies. Sephardic merchants played a significant role in sustaining trade with the main land America. For trade with Spanish colonies was interdicted to all foreigners.

1624 had been related in some documents, that there are cattle and Christianized Indians on the islands of Curacao Bonaire and Aruba. Aruba is a low country, but has two small mountains, called Yamanota and Pan de Azucar as called by the Spanish, the last presents itself to the eye in the shape of a sugar-loaf, our todays "Hooiberg" Haystack. A pyramid shaped hill about five miles in circumference and an eleva-

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tion of 165 m. The island is inhabited by families of Amerindian Christians, mestizos and some Spaniards". They sustained their selves as farmer, fishermen. They hunted and herd horses, mules, donkeys, cattle, goats and sheep. Nothing is heard yet about landings on Aruba, though its few inhabitants some years afterwards saw ships sporting the flag of the West India Company sailing past.

Aruba's horsemen frighten the Dutch. In January 1627 a Dutch expedition commanded by Van Uytgeest was off St. Vincent, where they remained for some days. Next their course led them past Martinique, Santa Lucia, Dominica and St.Kitts and finally reaching Tortuga. Along the coast they cruised to Maracaibo and on May 1627 they arrived off Aruba, observing on shore many natives on horseback who did not look friendly, and did not think it advisable to disembark there. They sailed on to Rio Hacha, Colombia. Van Uytgeest, therefore, must have been close inshore, and the sight of those horsemen on Aruba must have been so disquieting that his people, who were not easily daunted, preferred the safety of their ships.

Between 1628 and 1630, some Dutch squadrons are noted sailing past in the Caribbean Sea steering for Bonaire. As a result Aruba was not the first of the three Leeward Islands to be called at by the Dutch, this was to be Bonaire in 1623. Of course there have been more ships

around the islands under other flags. But not everything that happened was recorded.

In 1633 Spain conquers the island of St. Martin, a strategic point on the line connecting Brazil and New Netherland. They were in search of a suitable operational base in the struggle for supremacy in the New World. They are weighing the pros and cons of various islands. In this connection refer to the island of Aruba and its importance with regard to the route to Lake Maracaibo. But they don't possess sufficient information concerning the South Caribbean. Until Jan Jansz Otsen, who had fallen into Spanish hands and thus seen something of Curacao, offers his services to the Dutch squadrons. Now! The Dutch decided to conquer these three "islands of Curacao" in the year 1634.□

To get to know a little more regarding Aruba's and its cultural origins we highly recommend you to book your participation in our cultural encounter session.

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## Biden's test: Engineering economic boom in a partisan divide

By JOSH BOAK  
AP Economics Writer

**BALTIMORE (AP)** — When Joe Biden entered the White House as vice president, the economy was cratering. Job losses were mounting. Stocks were crashing. Millions of Americans were in the early stages of losing their homes to foreclosure as the housing bubble burst.

Biden returns to the White House as president a dozen years later with the economy battered and shaken by a pandemic. But this time is different — and it could reset the nation's politics if Biden and Democrats can count on a level of growth not seen in a generation.

Despite the 9.8 million jobs lost due to the coronavirus, there are signs the country is on the cusp of a kind of boom unseen in the Obama and Trump eras. Checking account balances have surged by \$2.4 trillion since the outbreak began. Home prices are soaring because of hot demand. And each additional vaccination moves the world's largest economy closer to fully re-opening.

"If the economy is improving substantially by spring or early summer, that might actually help Biden get more of his agenda done ... because success can beget success," said Jason Furman, who was top economist for the Obama administration. He pointed to the possibility of growth easing the path for an infrastructure program and climate investments.

But hanging over any effort to boost the economy is an enduring partisan divide that contributed to the deadly assault on the U.S. Capitol this month as Biden's Electoral College victory was set to be certified. Politics is increasingly shaping how Americans feel about the economy, scrambling the political incentives for lawmakers to cooperate.

There also are concerns about whether the worsening pandemic and slow pace of vaccinations thus far could portend more serious problems on the coro-



**The Washington Monument and the National Mall are visible as members of the U.S. Air Force Honor Guard walk along the West Front of the U.S. Capitol at the site of the 59th Presidential Inauguration in Washington, Monday, Jan. 18, 2021.**

Associated Press

navirus front that could hurt the economic recovery. The potential for a boom reflects in large part the roughly \$4 trillion approved so far in federal aid, with Biden last week proposing \$1.9 trillion more, an unprecedented level of stimulus.

The additional money, which must be approved by Congress, is intended to accelerate the vaccine rollout, reopen schools and reduce the child poverty rate to a historic low.

The investment bank Goldman Sachs estimates that growth this year could be 6.6% if part of Biden's stimulus plan passes. That would be the strongest gain since 1984, when a 7.2% increase in the gross domestic product helped carry Republican President Ronald Reagan to a second term in a landslide. Wells Fargo forecasts growth of 4.6% this year, which would be the best since 1999.

Still, there are plenty of economic risks facing Biden. The most bullish forecasts hinge on getting much of Biden's aid package through Congress. And any gains would probably depend on overcoming the pandemic. There is also the possibility that the added stimulus championed by Biden could be more than the economy needs, per-

haps stirring inflation. But the Great Recession taught Biden's team the benefit of going big with stimulus. Incoming White House Chief of Staff Ron Klain says Biden's officials learned the hard way that the roughly \$800 billion approved in 2009 to fight the Great Recession was insufficient, a mistake they're unwilling to repeat this time. "It wasn't large enough," Klain said Friday at a livestreamed Washington Post event. "Our recovery lagged as a result." During the first nine months of the Obama presidency, the unemployment rate climbed to 10% and the swift recovery that was predicted never happened as the country took years to work through housing foreclosures and rebuild its financial system.

This left Obama administration officials having to argue that the economy would have been even worse without the stimulus. Republicans countered that the effort had flopped as they won control of the House in the 2010 midterm elections.

"There isn't much doubt that the economy did better in 2009 and 2010 because of the recovery act," said Douglas Elmendorf, who was director of the Congressional Bud-

get Office at the time and now serves as dean of Harvard University's Kennedy School. "Too many people took the failure to hit (stronger growth) as a sign that the stimulus didn't work, when, in fact, the economy was worse off than widely understood."

Biden can count on backing from Wall Street investors this time to borrow. Helped by supportive Federal Reserve policies, low interest rates make it easier to keep financing a stimulus and repay added debt. The interest rate on a 10-year U.S. Treasury note is about 1.15%, compared with 11.67% in 1984 when growth prospects last looked this good and the size of the federal debt was significantly smaller.

Republican lawmakers still see the need for more aid to contain the pandemic, but some are voicing concerns about Biden's desire for another big spending package. They stress that any new spending should be directed toward increasing vaccinations and that his proposal for direct checks of \$1,400 per person could delay people from returning to work.

"Blasting out another \$2 trillion in borrowed or printed money — when the ink on December's \$1 trillion aid bill is barely dry and much

of the money is not yet spent — would be a colossal waste and economically harmful," Republican Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania said in a statement. Republican voters have already turned bearish on the economy after President Donald Trump lost. The University of Michigan reported Friday that its index of consumer expectations among Republicans plunged from a reading of 96 in October to 53 in January. That could dampen their willingness to spend and encourage Republican lawmakers to blame Democrats for any economic ills.

For now, the Biden team is hoping to push through its stimulus with Republican support in the Senate. But the political tensions might force him to pursue many of his initiatives — like a \$15 minimum wage and tax increases on corporations and the wealthy — with only Democratic support. Should Republicans regain control in Congress, any policies passed exclusively with Democratic backing could be quickly reversed or allowed to expire. This seesawing between conflicting policies could erode the degree of certainty that businesses and consumers need to make investments that lead to growth, said Donald Schneider, a member of the policy research team at Cornerstone Macro and former chief economist of the House Ways and Means Committee.

"It is a big problem going forward if one side comes to power and makes changes and then the other side comes into power and reverses them and on and on it goes," Schneider said. □

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# Extremists exploit a loophole in social moderation: Podcasts

By TALI ARBEL  
AP Technology Writer

Major social platforms have been cracking down on the spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories in the leadup to the presidential election, and expanded their efforts in the wake of the Jan. 6 Capitol riot. But Apple and Google, among others, have left open a major loophole for this material: Podcasts.

Podcasts made available by the two Big Tech companies let you tune into the world of the QAnon conspiracy theory, wallow in President Donald Trump's false claims of a stolen election and bask in other extremism. Accounts that have been banned on social media for election misinformation, threatening or bullying, and breaking other rules also still live on as podcasts available on the tech giants' platforms. Conspiracy theorists have peddled stolen-election fantasies, coronavirus conspiracies and violent rhetoric. One podcaster, RedPill78, called the Capitol siege a "staged event" in a Jan. 11 episode of Red Pill News. The day before the Capitol riot, a more popular podcast, X22 Report, spoke confidently about a Trump second term, explained that Trump would need to "remove" many members of Congress to further his plans, and said "We the people, we are the storm, and we're coming to DC."

Both are available on Apple and Google podcast platforms.

Podcasting "plays a particularly outsized role" in propagating white supremacy, said a 2018 report from the Anti-Defamation League. Many white supremacists,



This combination of photos shows various podcasts, Friday, Jan. 15, 2021.

like QAnon adherents, support Trump. Podcasting's an intimate, humanizing mode of communication that lets extremists expound on their ideas for hours at a time, said Oren Segal of ADL's Center on Extremism.

Elsewhere on social media, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube have been cracking down on accounts amplifying unfounded QAnon claims that Trump is fighting deep state enemies and cannibals operating a child-sex trafficking ring. A major talk radio company, Cumulus, told its hosts to tone down rhetoric about stolen elections and violent uprisings or risk termination, although it's not clear what impact that dictate has had.

Google-owned YouTube axed "Bannon's War Room," a channel run by Trump loyalist Steve Bannon on Jan. 8 after he spread false election claims and called for the beheading of Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious-disease expert. But podcast versions of Bannon's show live on at Apple and Google. Spotify took it down in November, according to one of its hosts.

"Podcasts filled with hatred and incitement to violence

should not be treated any differently than any other content," Segal said. "If you're going to take a strong stance against hate and extremism in the platform in any way, it should be all-inclusive." Apple, Spotify and Google curate lists of top podcasts and recommend them to users. Apple and Spotify are the dominant players in the U.S., with other players far behind, said Dave Zohrob, CEO of the podcast analytics firm Chartable. Despite its name recognition, Google remains a tiny presence.

Spotify said it takes down podcasts that violate its policies against hate speech, copyright violations or break any laws, using "algorithmic and human detection measures" to identify violations. Apple's guidelines prohibit content that is illegal or promotes violence, graphic sex or drugs or is "otherwise considered obscene, objectionable, or in poor taste." Apple did not reply to repeated questions about its content guidelines or moderation.

Google declined to explain the discrepancy between what's available on YouTube and what's on Google Podcasts, saying only that its podcast service "indexes audio available on the web" much the way its search engine indexes web pages. The company said it removes podcasts from its platform "in very rare circumstances, largely guided by local law."

X22 Report and Bannon's War Room were No. 20 and No. 32 on Apple's list of top

as a longtime QAnon follower and said in a recent episode that her podcast is "just my way of not being censored." She said she was kicked off Twitter in January and booted from Instagram four times last year. She currently has Instagram, Facebook and YouTube accounts; her podcast is available on Apple and Google. Spotify removed the podcast Friday after The Associated Press inquired about it.

X22 Report, RedPill78 and Hayes did not respond to requests for comment sent via their websites. Torres did not reply to a Facebook message.

Podcasts suffer from the same misinformation problem as other platforms, said Shane Creevy, head of editorial for Kinzen, a startup created by former Facebook and Twitter executives that offers a disinformation tracker to companies, including some that host or curate podcasts.

Creevy points out that it's harder to analyze misinformation from video and audio than from text. Podcasts can also run for hours, making them difficult to monitor. And podcasting has additional challenges in that there are no reliable statistics on their audience, unlike a YouTube stream, which shows views, or a tweet or Facebook post, which shows likes and shares, Creevy said. □

## Conceptis SudoKu

By Dave Green

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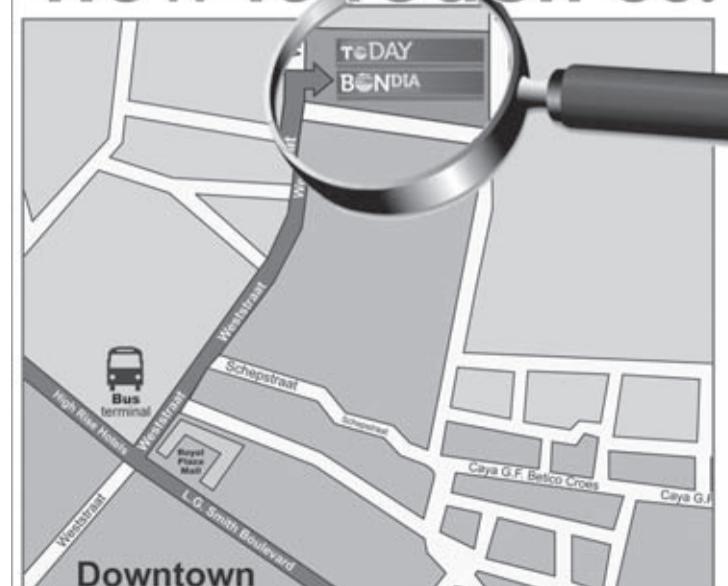
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## Skylar Astin finds new notes to hit on 'Zoey's Playlist'

By ALICIA RANCILIO

Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — By page two of the pilot script for NBC's "Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist," Skylar Astin knew he wanted the role of Max Richman.

The NBC musical series, now airing season two on Tuesdays, stars Jane Levy as Zoey Clarke, a woman who realizes people's innermost feelings by elaborate song and dance numbers that only she can see. Astin's Max is best friends with Zoey, and also in love with her.

Astin was just coming off the final season of The CW's "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend," also a musical series, where he took over in the final season as a love interest for Rachel Bloom's character. He wasn't looking for more of the same. Then came the enthusiastic pitches about "Zoey's."

"My agent, Jacob, and my manager, Mike, called me and said, 'Hey, you've got an offer. You're going to like it,'" recalled Astin, who was speaking over Zoom from Vancouver while in quarantine before resuming production on "Zoey's" after holiday break. "My manager—who especially during pilot season is a little



This image released by NBC shows Jane Levy, left, and Skylar Astin in a scene from "Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist."

jaded — he's like, 'I'm embarrassed to say this script made me cry.'"

Sure, the job might seem like a piece of cake for Astin, 33, who was in the original production of Broadway's "Spring Awakening" and found stardom in the smash-hit films "Pitch Perfect" and "Pitch Perfect 2," but he describes it more as "familiar."

"I know what to expect. I know things change. I know the camera changes

things. I know not to get my hopes up about a specific song or choreographer. I know how to conserve while filming one of these numbers and I know the kind of focus and intensity and energy it takes. And I'm always really careful about safety."

Astin says he has two musical personalities on the series. There's "Magical Max" who gives it his all when Zoey's witnessing him belt out his true feelings. And

then there's Max as is, who isn't quite as polished. He consciously sang to Zoey in season one in a flash mob and Astin says "we had to establish that he's not tone deaf or else it would be very unpleasant for the viewer," so he describes that version of Max's musicality as "a good passing grade."

The show's creator, Austin Winsberg, summed it up in an e-mail as "Skylar does his best to sound average or kind of flat, but as I've

Associated Press

learned, even him performing at a 2 is better than me (or most people) are at a 10."

Astin has a number of projects he's working on in his downtime. He's writing and recording an album he says has a Top 40 feel. Astin invested in a home studio while in quarantine at home in Los Angeles so he could record safely. "There's one that sounds like a Sean Mendes song. There's one that sounds like a male Taylor Swift song. I call it "Male-or-Swift." There's one that my friends and family say is the best driving song they've ever heard. Another one has some falsetto in it that almost sounds like The Weeknd.

"I really invested in this and it's been 100% independent." He says he has seven or eight songs completed and will maybe add one or two more, but the goal is to release it this year. "I can't hold onto it any longer. That will drive me crazy."

Astin also co-wrote a Hanukkah holiday movie with Danny Jolles that he describes as, "my favorite thing I've ever written. It's live-action, it's clean, it would be rated PG and it made me cry writing it. It was such a pleasure." □

## Packers QB Rodgers says he will guest-host on 'Jeopardy!'

**GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP)** — Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers says he will be a guest host on "Jeopardy!" during the offseason.

The show is currently using a series of interim hosts to replace Alex Trebek, who died of cancer on Nov. 8. That process began when record-holding contestant Ken Jennings made his debut on an episode that aired Monday.

Rodgers was a winning "Celebrity Jeopardy!" contestant in 2015. The All-Pro quarterback and two-time MVP is currently preparing to lead the Packers (13-3) into their NFC divisional playoff game Saturday with the Los Angeles Rams (11-6). "The show has been so special to me over the



Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers looks to throw during the first half of an NFL football game against the Indianapolis Colts in Indianapolis, in this Sunday, Nov. 22, 2020, file photo.

Associated Press

years," Rodgers said Tuesday. "It's been a staple at my house here in Green Bay for the last 16 years — 6 o'clock, watching Alex and trying to get as many questions as I can. When the opportunity came up

in 2015, that was a dream come true. It really was. To be on there, to get to meet Alex was just such a special moment. We're all obviously sad about his passing." Rodgers first made the announcement earlier Tues-

day during a appearance on Sirius XM's "The Pat McAfee Show." A representative from "Jeopardy!" declined comment and said no announcement has been made about future guest hosts.

"I may have jumped the gun a little bit, so I apologize to 'Jeopardy!' if they wanted to announce it," Rodgers said. "I just got so excited on the show earlier. It kind of just went down the last couple of days, us figuring it out. It is very exciting. It's for the offseason. We'll be even more excited when that opportunity gets a little closer."

Rodgers mentioned the nostalgic connection people have to certain figures based on their childhood. He compared meeting

Trebek during his "Celebrity Jeopardy!" stint to his first production meetings with Keith Jackson, John Madden and Dan Fouts, long-time broadcasters he had watched as a kid.

"We all have so much love and affection I think for what (Trebek's) meant to just that half hour, that 22 minutes of our lives on a daily basis for those of us who are big fans of the show," Rodgers said. □

1	7	6	4	2	3	8	5	9
5	8	3	9	6	7	4	1	2
4	2	9	8	5	1	3	6	7
9	4	1	3	8	5	2	7	6
3	6	2	1	7	9	5	8	4
7	5	8	2	4	6	9	3	1
8	1	5	7	9	4	6	2	3
6	3	4	5	1	2	7	9	8
2	9	7	6	3	8	1	4	5

Difficulty Level ★★

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# Kevin Na has a big finish and wins the Sony Open

By DOUG FERGUSON  
AP Golf Writer

**HONOLULU (AP)** — The spoils at the Sony Open belonged to Kevin Na, a winner for the fourth straight season after coming from three shots behind with six holes to play for a one-shot victory with a birdie on the final hole.

The consolation prize belonged to Chris Kirk, and it felt like a win.

Kirk stepped away in May 2019 because of alcoholism and depression, a decision he feels saved himself, his family and his career. He was playing the final event of a medical extension the PGA Tour awarded him for lost time, and he delivered a 65 to finish one shot behind.

The birdie on the final hole gave him enough points to regain full status.

"It totally changes everything being able to be back to picking my schedule like I'm used to over the last number of years," Kirk said. "To go into a week and say I've got to finish top three to keep going and do is silly. I'm thankful God put me in a great situation, and you never know what's going to happen."

Na could have felt similarly. The Sony Open is typically so crowded at the top that no one is safe and no one is ever out of it. Na only looked to be out of it when he missed a 6-foot birdie putt on the 11th and then three-putted for bogey from 40 feet on the 12th to fall three shots behind Brendan Steele.

He answered with three straight birdies, Steele faltered at Waialae for the second straight year, and Na delivered the winning shot with a 5-wood from the rough that went just over the back of the green on the par-5 18th, leaving him a simple up-and-down for birdie and a 5-under 65.

"I was playing maybe a little bit more aggressive coming down the stretch, not worrying so much about second or third, more focused on just that — winning," Na said. "Every year, I hope to win and



Kevin Na, left, embraces caddie Kenneth Harms after winning the final round of the Sony Open golf tournament Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021, at Waialae Country Club in Honolulu.

Associated Press

I expect to win on the right golf courses."

Kirk and Joaquin Niemann (66) finished one shot behind, and it only felt good to one of them. Niemann was runner-up for the second straight week in Hawaii. He finished the two Hawaii events at 45-under par without a trophy to show for it.

"Just another good week, so happy for that," Niemann said. He leaves Hawaii with \$1,369,400 in earnings.

"I think experience is the reason why I've been winning," he said. "When you do it again, you know it seems like the next one comes easier. ... I think more about winning since I've been winning more often." □

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# Still playing: Bills, Bucs risen from Super Bowl droughts

By BARRY WILNER  
AP Pro Football Writer

In the 1990s, the Bills buffeted their way to four successive — if not successful — Super Bowls. No other franchise has managed that.

About a decade later, the long-downtrodden Buccaneers swashbuckled to an NFL title.

Ever since, pretty much nothing for those teams. Until now.

Next weekend, Buffalo, which last got this far in the 1993 season, heads to reigning Super Bowl champion Kansas City. And the Chiefs could be missing their dynamic star quarterback, Patrick Mahomes, who was concussed in a 22-17 victory Sunday over Cleveland.

"It's a special time to be a Buffalo Bill," tackle Dion Dawkins said.

Meanwhile, TB (as in Tampa Bay), led by TB (as in Tom Brady) heads to Green Bay for the NFC championship game. Yes, the same Bucs who made the postseason once, in 2007, after their 2002 league crown, and not since — until Brady and his six Super Bowl rings arrived from New England for this season. Their 30-20 win at New Orleans sent them to Lambeau Field for the NFC championship match.

"It's great for our team," said Brady, who further es-



Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Tom Brady (12) works against the New Orleans Saints during the first half of an NFL divisional round playoff football game, Sunday, Jan. 17, 2021, in New Orleans.

Associated Press

tablishes how responsible he was for all those titles in New England with each victory in Tampa. "We worked hard to get to this point. Two road playoff wins is pretty sweet."

Which two teams will be sweetest? The teams that will head to Tampa — yes, that's where the Super Bowl will be staged on Feb. 7, and no team has played in the big game on its home field.

## NFC

Tampa Bay (13-5) at Green Bay (14-3)

Both teams used key plays by their defense to win in

the divisional round, and likely will need similar performances to advance. Sure, the Bucs and Pack are lauded for their offense, from their quarterbacks — Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers has had perhaps the best season of his illustrious career — to strong runners Leonard Fournette and Aaron Jones, to a bevy of receivers, to solid lines. But holding down All-Pros Rodgers and wide receiver Davante Adams is a must for Tampa Bay. So is neutralizing Brady hooking up with Mike Evans, Chris Godwin, Rob Gronkowski and Cam-

eron Brate.

"It was huge. I think the defense was the key to the game," Brady said after the win over the Saints. It needs to be huge once more."

As for the conditions at Lambeau Field, well, forecasts call for temperatures in the 20s, which certainly is cold for a team from Florida, but not frigid. And remember where Brady won all those titles.

Oddly, the Packers have not won an NFC championship game at home since the 1996 season. They are four-point favorites in the earliest betting lines. If

that seems low, remember who is quarterbacking the opposition.

## AFC

Buffalo (14-3) at Kansas City (15-2)

So much will depend on Mahomes' condition. While journeyman backup Chad Henne did well enough after Mahomes departed Sunday in the third quarter, even making two big plays to clinch the win, the Chiefs would be severely hampered if Mahomes can't play.

Andy Reid, whose willingness to gamble and always play to win should be lauded regardless of circumstance, has designed a nearly unstoppable attack — when Mahomes is behind center. It's hard to imagine Travis Kelce, Tyreek Hill and the other threats being, well, as threatening without him.

Reid maintains there is something else at play in KC. Asked what impressed him most about the Chiefs holding off Cleveland, he replied:

"Probably just the intestinal fortitude of the guys pounding through, not getting down when Pat went down. That's easier said than done. Somebody asked that just about the quarterback, so just that part of it, having that trust, having earned that respect from the guys I think is big. □



New York Knicks forward Julius Randle (30) holds onto the ball before driving down court during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Orlando Magic, Monday, Jan. 18, 2021, in New York.

Associated Press

By DENIS P. GORMAN  
Associated Press  
NEW YORK (AP) — Elfrid Payton's words at the podium Monday had to be sweet music to the ears of

New York Knicks coaches and executives.

"We're not satisfied," Payton said after the Knicks' 91-84 victory over the Orlando Magic on Monday.

## Barrett, Randle power Knicks past struggling Magic 91-84

For a franchise that has spent the most of the last two decades trying to find its way, Payton's outlook may have represented if not an organizational sea change, then certainly a noticeable difference.

As did their play. R.J. Barrett scored 22 points and had 10 rebounds, and Julius Randle added 21 points and 17 rebounds to lead the New York to its second straight win. Payton chipped in with 12 points and rookie guard Immanuel Quickley added 11 for the Knicks,

who improved to 7-8.

"Our group is learning how to win," Randle said. "I credit that to our coaches." While the Knicks are taking baby steps forward, the same can't be said of the Magic. They have lost six in a row to drop to 6-8. Nikola Vucevic had 24 points and 14 rebounds for Orlando while Aaron Gordon had 18 points and 17 rebounds and Terrence Ross 19 points.

"We gave ourselves a chance but we kind of blew it at the same time," Ross said.

Perhaps the early start -- it was a noon tip-off -- affected both teams. New York led 47-38 after a first half in which the Knicks made only 37% of their shots and Orlando 32%.

New York's lead grew to 68-54 after Obi Toppin's alley-oop jam one minute into the fourth.

The Magic rallied and went ahead 81-80 when Ross' 28-foot heave beat an expiring shot clock. The lead lasted for all of eight seconds, with Randle tying the game with a free throw. □